

HONOURS/MSc PROJECT 2019

Project title: Examining brain structure in first-episode mania.

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Project description:

While there is reasonable evidence to indicate that there are brain structural abnormalities in adults with bipolar disorder, far fewer studies have examined brain structure in individuals following a first episode of the illness. Characterizing brain structure at this early stage is important for determining whether brain changes are related to factors other than those associated with the manifest illness course. The aim of this project is to characterize differences in the structure of the brain in individuals in the early stage of the illness versus controls, using an available dataset comprising individuals who have been stabilised following a first episode of mania. The project is expected to provide insight into the neurodevelopmental characteristics of bipolar disorder. A secondary question pertains to identifying whether longitudinal brain changes over a 12-month period are differentially affected by two commonly prescribed treatments for the illness.

The student will be responsible for conducting a literature review of the area, the development of the proposal and generation of study hypotheses, as well as data processing and statistical analyses. Publication of results is expected at the end of the project.

Department: Psychiatry, Melbourne Neuropsychiatry Centre, University of Melbourne

Research themes: Neuropsychiatry